

---

# THE REFORMER.

---

Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth.—*Jeremiah*, v. 1.

---

Vol. X.]

PHILADELPHIA, FEBRUARY, 1829.

[No. 110

## STOPPING THE MAILS, &c. ON THE SABBATH.

There being such a general movement at present in this country among the clergy, respecting the observance of the Sabbath, and such efforts making to induce the government to pass a law prohibiting\* the transportation of the mails on that day, we have been requested to lay before the public such articles and facts as are in our possession, having a bearing on this subject. In complying with this request, so far as our pages will permit, we shall begin with the piece entitled "*Sunday Police*," appending a few notes which did not appear in the original article. This article was inserted in our January number of 1826, but there being so many who have since subscribed and have not read it, we deem it proper to give it a place again.

[From the *Boston Patriot*.]

### "SUNDAY POLICE."

A pious man will always be desirous of complying with what he believes to be the will of God; but if his piety is tempered with discretion, he will never wish to enforce its observance on others by civil penalties. Such compulsion constitutes the very essence of persecution; and whatever disguises it assumes, under whatever pretext it makes its appearance, it is still persecution. True piety is the very reverse of the dogmatical, overbearing and inquisitorial spirit of persecution.

A pious man is conscious of his own fallibility. However strong his persuasion in the truth of his opinion, he knows that he may be in error. All his feelings will instantly revolt from compelling others to adopt for a rule

---

\* A remonstrance to Congress against the enactment of a law prohibiting the transportation of the mails on Sunday is left at the Coffee-House in this city for signatures.

of life, that which they do not believe to be a correct rule.

Though God requires of every man obedience to his will, he has given to no one authority to enforce such obedience on others. This he has reserved to be exercised according to his own pleasure. For man, then, to assume such authority, is an usurpation of the prerogative of God.

Religion is a thing exclusively between a man and his Maker; it is a voluntary offering from the heart; and from its very nature cannot be a subject of civil cognizance. A Mahometan may be compelled to go into a Christian temple and repeat a Christian form of worship; but in this cold and formal repetition of words, there is nothing that does honour to our religion, or that can be acceptable to God. So a Protestant, in a Catholic country, may be compelled to abstain from meat during Lent, but such compulsory abstinence is no act of worship.

In the unquestionable truth of these maxims we find a very conclusive objection to the law of this state, prohibiting all the citizens from engaging in any of the usual occupations of life on Sunday. If a man does not believe that it is required of him by the law of God to abstain from these employments, that are not only innocent, but praise-worthy on any other day, he will submit with reluctance, and only from necessity; in this forced submission there is no religion on his part, nor does it in any way conduce to the advancement of piety in others.

What reason can be given, then, for using this force, that will not apply with equal justice in favour of the Catholics enforcing on the Protestants an

abstinence from meat during Lent, and in favour of Mahometans compelling Christians to worship Mahomet? If we have a right to compel men to follow that mode of worship which we deem the true one, the Mahometan and Catholic, who are firmly persuaded of the truth of their sentiments, must have the same rights. This would at once produce a system of universal persecution. Suppose, then, it were a fact, that Christ did require of his followers to observe Sunday, with a strictness approaching to Jewish austerity, he has certainly not given to one part of his followers an authority to exact from others, who differ from them in opinion, such an observance. But does he in fact require this of any? It may, I think, be clearly shown that he does not.

1st. There is no one precept in the New Testament enjoining on us to keep a Sabbath. If we are bound to keep one, then it is in consequence of the Mosaic law. This no one will presume to call in question.\*

2nd. The language of the fourth commandment is, "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord." But Christians keep the first day, and not the seventh. No Jew would think that he complied with this law, by observing the first day of the week, if he laboured on the seventh. There is not a word in the Mosaic law about substituting any other day for the one ap-

\* Archdeacon Paley, author of *Evidences of the Christian Religion, Natural and Political Theology, &c.* in speaking of the christian Sabbath, observes:

"A cessation, upon that day, from labor, beyond the time of attendance upon public worship, is not intimated in any passage of the New Testament; nor did Christ or his Apostles deliver, that we know of, any command to their disciples for a discontinuance, upon that day, of the common offices of their profession."—Again, the same writer adds: "The opinion, that Christ and his Apostles meant to retain the duties of the Jewish Sabbath, shifting only the day from the seventh to the first, seems to prevail without sufficient proof."

pointed, nor does it appear that such a thing ever occurred to the minds of the Jews.

3rd. Neither is there a single word, nor even an allusion, relating to a substitution of the first day for the seventh, in the whole New Testament. The subject is never mentioned in any of the discourses of Christ, nor in any of the epistles of his Apostles.

On the whole then, it is certain, that if Christians are bound to keep a Sabbath it is in consequence of the fourth commandment, and it is the seventh day and not the first, which they are bound to keep. The government of this state, therefore, in setting apart the first day of the week to be kept as a Jewish Sabbath, has added to the Christian law, and imposed a restraint upon our Christian liberty, which neither Christ nor his disciples warrant.

Let us now look to the usage of the first Christians. If Sunday was observed by them as it is now in this country, we should find it recorded in the early history of the churches. No trace of the kind appears. In the Acts of the Apostles, written by the Evangelist Luke, the first day of the week is mentioned but once, and then not by any particular name. Till the reign of Constantine, the first Christian Emperor, about the year A. D. 300, the practice of Christians appears to have been to assemble on the first day of the week for the purpose of religious worship, in the morning or evening, and sometimes both. During the rest of the day, they followed their usual occupations, and there is not the least intimation that Christians were prohibited from attending to the common secular business of life more on that day than any other. On the contrary, it appears to be certain, that no such prohibition did exist till the period mentioned above. The power having then become Christian, it was made subservient to the aggrandizement of the priesthood.

There is a work of Justin Martyr, a distinguished Christian advocate, who



wrote about the year 150, which throws considerable light on this subject. Justin was one of the most distinguished Christians of his time—accomplished in all the learning of the age—whose zeal and sincerity in the cause of his faith, were proved by his martyrdom. The work to which I allude is a Defence of the Christian Religion, written in the form of a dialogue between himself and Trypho, a learned Jew. One of the objections of the Jew is that the Christians did not observe the Sabbath. He says that “The Christians, though they boasted of the truth of their religion, and wished to excel all other people, differed in nothing from the Heathen in their manner of living, because they neither observed the festivals, nor the Sabbath, nor circumcision.”

Now what answer would one of our ministers make to this objection from the mouth of a Jew? I have it to my hand, in the answer to the fifty-ninth question of the Assembly's shorter Catechism. These divines say, that

“From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, God appointed the seventh day of the week to be the weekly Sabbath, and the first day of the week ever since, to continue to the end of the world, which is the Christian Sabbath.”

And what authority have they for saying that God has appointed the first day for the christian Sabbath? Not the least. There is not a single precept in the New Testament, not a single word enjoining on us the first day or any other to be kept as a Sabbath. Let us now see what answer Justin makes to his Jew.

“There is,” says he, “another kind of circumcision, and you think highly of that of the flesh. The law will have you keep a perpetual Sabbath; and you, when you have spent one day in idleness, think you are religious, not knowing why it was commanded.”

Would Justin have sneered at the one day's idleness of the Jews, if the Christians had adopted the same usage,

with only a change from the seventh day to the first? But this is not the whole of his answer: we will hear him farther.

“As, therefore, circumcision began from Abraham, and Sabbath, and Sacrifice, and oblation from Moses, which it has been shown were ordained on account of your nation's hardness of heart, so according to the counsel of the Father, they were to end in Jesus Christ the Son of God.”

I will add one further extract from Justin—“Do you not see,” he says to Trypho, “that the elements are never idle, nor keep a Sabbath? Continue as you were created, for if there was no need of circumcision before Abraham, nor of the observance of the Sabbath, and festivals, and oblations, before Moses, neither now is there likewise after Christ.”

The first remarks to be made on these extracts from Justin, is, that he admits that the Christians of his time did not keep a Sabbath. And the second is, he contends that they are not bound to observe it, more than they are the rite of circumcision or the Jewish festivals and sacrifices. All were abrogated by Christ.\* It is impossible that the Christians of that age should keep a Sabbath, and the most learned man in the church be ignorant of the fact. Equally impossible is it, that if the Christians in the age of the Apostles kept a Sabbath, the practice and the memory of it should be so completely lost so soon after their deaths, particularly as St. John did not die till

---

\* CALVIN, the great apostle of the Presbyterians, speaking of the 4th commandment, says: “The Fathers frequently call it a *shadowy commandment*, because it contains the external observance of the day, which was abolished, with the rest of the figures, at the advent of Christ.” And again: “It was the design of the heavenly lawgiver under the rest of the seventh day, to give the people of Israel a figure of the spiritual rest, by which the faithful ought to refrain from their own works, in order to leave God to work with them.” See *Calvin's Institutes*, Vol. 1. page 418.

about the year A. D. 100, only 50 years before Justin wrote. We may, therefore, consider it as certain, that till the year 150, no Sabbath was observed by the Christian church, as a "day of idleness," to use the words of Justin, or as a day of abstinence from the secular affairs of life. It may then be asked, when was the first day of the week observed as a Sabbath? I answer, in the reign of Constantine, A. D. 300.

His edict is as follows:—

"Let all the judges and town people, and the occupations of all trades, rest on the venerable day of the sun,\* (die solis.) But let those that are situated in the country, freely and at full liberty, attend to the business of agriculture, because it often happens that no other day is so fit for sowing corn and planting vines, lest the critical moment being let slip, men should lose the commodities granted them by the providence of heaven."

The great autocrat did not think it

\* It is evident that Constantine does not enjoin an observance of this day from any christian precept or christian authority, as he refers only to a superstitious veneration, among the heathen, of the sun, to which Sunday was dedicated. Indeed it is pretty certain that Constantine, at this time, was only a heathen. Historians consider him more of a pagan than a christian, both in his conduct and opinions, long after he commenced his reign; and it is an undoubted fact that he was initiated into the church by baptism, only a few days before his death.

The following is copied from the "*Seventh-day Baptist Magazine*."

"The first day of the week, was observed by the heathen as a festival of the sun, from which it is called Sunday. (See Chambers's Dict. Arts and Sciences.) This was the idolatry that the Israelites were so much addicted to. 2 Kings, 23, and Ezekiel 8, 16. They had, when Josiah came to the throne, their priests of the high places, and horses and chariots consecrated to the sun; they offered their children to Moloch, and burned incense unto the sun, moon, planets, and all the host of heaven: and, in a word, performed all the rites of Sunday worship."

prudent to extend the prohibition to the whole of his subjects at first. The business of agriculture was left as before; the husbandman labored on his lands on Sunday as any other day. It was not till some time later, that the priesthood obtained sufficient power to arrest the business of agriculture.

On the whole, it is very certain that it is no part of christian duty to keep a Sabbath—but if any day is to be kept, it is the seventh, and not the first. It is undoubtedly an innocent usage, and those who think it their duty to do so, ought to continue. But it is highly unjust and unchristian to compel others to observe a Sabbath which is no where enjoined in the New Testament, which was not observed by the Apostles and the first followers of Christ, and which was not introduced into Christianity until it became a State Religion. It sprung from an unnatural union of Church and State; its origin is from the same source with all the other Papal corruptions of Christianity, which have overwhelmed and buried the simplicity of our religion under a flood of idolatrous ceremonies.

#### THE SABBATH.

The following remarks on the subject of the Sabbath, were written by *John Leland*, now of Berkshire county, Massachusetts. Mr. Leland is among the oldest and most laborious and successful Baptist preachers in this country, as many of the Baptist churches in Virginia and other places, which he planted and watered in former years, can testify. Through his instrumentality, in a great measure, the establishment of Episcopalianism in Virginia by law, was abrogated, and the 16,000 pounds of tobacco per annum taken from the church parsons. This was productive of more benefit to the cause of christianity in that part of the country than all the legislative acts which had ever been passed for supporting it, as it rid the people of a body of priests who lived on the fat of the land, while they were only stumbling blocks to all who depended on them for instruction or example. From a letter published in a Richmond [Va.] paper of last year, it appears that Mr. Leland has been a preacher upwards of 53 years, tra-



velled 80,000 miles, preached 10,000 times, and baptised 1458 persons, a great portion of whom professed to be seals of his ministry. Some of our Baptist friends who objected to our remarks respecting the Sabbath a few months since, will, we hope, give a candid hearing to what is said by one of their oldest and most distinguished ministers. He observes:

"From the creation of the world down to the giving of Manna in the wilderness, (more than 400 years) is there a line in the Bible that intimates that any of the saints, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Melchizedec, or Joseph, ever observed a Sabbath day? Or is there any reproof given to any for neglecting it? \* \* \*

"Has the blessed Saviour, or his inspired Apostles, left on record any command for all men, or for any man, to observe the *seventh* day—the *first* day, or *any* day in the week, as a christian sabbath? deriving its morality, either from the rest of God on the seventh day, or from the law of Moses; but varying its mode of exercise to suit the christian economy? If so, where is the precept to be found?

"Among other *perfect qualities* of the Lord Jesus, his example for gospel preachers was one. He found the men of the world where they were; the Jews in particular, in the constant habit of synagogue worship, and his custom was to enter into the synagogue every Sabbath day; thus availing himself of their customs, for opportunities to preach unto them, and heal all that had need of healing. The old Sabbath was yet in force; but it was not an article which he enforced. He gave no information that the Sabbath should be changed, the *seventh day* for the *first*; or that synagogue worship was ordained by God.

"With this view of the subject, I have constantly attended public worship on the *first* day of the week for a number of years past. When I travel among or live amidst those who conscientiously keep the *seventh day*, it pleases me equally as well. And on any other day of the week, public wor-

ship is alike interesting. Did I live on the opposite side of the globe, where the day begins twelve hours before it does in this longitude, I should not be galled in my conscience about the hour. And if in the most northern Island that is peopled, where days are long, [several months] if I found christian saints—we should harmonize: for I would never worship *a day* and make a Saviour of it; but worship the Lord, in spirit and truth, every day.

"Among us, the *first day* of every week is attended to, by a majority of the people. The Jews among us, and those christians who prefer the *seventh day* to the first (though a very respectable body) are a minority in these United States. If this day is clothed with a legal establishment to enforce its observance, it loses its christian character and becomes a tyrant over conscience. Otherwise it is harmless in nature and may be salutary in its effect. \* \* \*

"Those who believe that christianity is a principle of state policy—that the state should be divided into religious districts, and that each district should be bound to have a preacher—that the preacher must pass through the expensive stages of literature and divinity to be eligible—and that his hearers must pay the back rents for his education as well as his yearly wages; as a link of the same chain, will strongly plead for a *day* to be *set apart by law*, as an *auction day* in each week, for the priest to vend the production of his toils to the highest bidders. But for christians to judge and set at naught a brother who differs with them in respect of observing a day or not observing it, (*when every one is to be fully persuaded in his own mind*) shows a great lack of the meekness of Christ. Cruel must that censure be for one christian to condemn another for not observing a day no where enjoined in the christian code! If such a command is to be found in the New Testament, let the text be designated, and I will take conviction."

## THE SABBATH—AGAIN.

[From the Religious Enquirer.]

Among the numerous schemes of the more ambitious of the clergy, I consider none more specious, and none more daring, than that which has lately been developed, relating to the observance of the first day of the week, commonly termed the Sabbath. Specious as it is, however, the subject needs but an examination to show that the hypothesis has but the semblance of authority in its justification. I am bold to affirm, that prior to the days of Moses, we have not discovered a vestige even of the Jewish Sabbath. That this was given to the Jews only, is as clear as the reason *why* it was given. It was to perpetuate their deliverance from the bondage in Egypt.

I am aware that certain theologians tell us, that the day was kept from the creation of the world to the crucifixion, and that since this epoch the *next day* in succession is to be kept as the Christian Sabbath. But their authority is not given and the hypothesis is unsupported by scripture or common sense. The Jews were commanded by Moses to keep the seventh day, which is our Saturday, and they keep it still. But did Christ or his Apostles ever intimate a change of the day? No. Have we any authority to say the day was kept sacred until the close of the third century? No. Did ever Constantine pretend that his edict was founded on a divine command? I think not. How the superstitious veneration for this day has crept into society, is a problem of easy solution. Men who set themselves up as the viceregerents of God on earth, perceived that in setting apart this day, and preaching for hire, they might easily earn the bread of *seven* days in *one*. This they accomplished by referring the people to the sanctions in the Old Testament, which related exclusively to the seventh day. As the clergy were the depositaries of learning, and the Bible was prohibited from common use, both by its manuscript price and clerical

exclusion, the bait was swallowed, and the people were enthralled.

It may, however, be asked, why the deception was continued so long, since the use of printing, and the general circulation of the scriptures. This can easily be answered. Public attention is not easily awakened to the detection of long sanctioned errors. An entire revolution in this opinion is not an instantaneous work; it must be the fruit of great exertion by the well informed, and the gradual diffusion of light.

People have falsely supposed, that so general an opinion of the sanctity of the first day must have divine authority for its basis. But the Papists are as tenacious respecting Lent, and other observances, as they are of the Sabbath; but what Protestant will justify them in these things? All arguments then, derived from such a source, are delusive; for, if they prove any thing in one case, they do in another. We know they do not in one instance, and therefore the declaration that they do in another, is utterly futile and irrational.

Some may be tempted to inquire, whether the writer would abolish the day, and count all days alike. In reply, permit me to state, that I would interrupt no man in the exercise of his religious duties, either on that or any other day; nor do I wish to be disturbed in the exercise of my religious duties or opinions. But I would not leave to the civil power the right of coercion in these matters, nor do I think the good of society requires it. Every citizen can equally as well be protected in the exercise of his opinions and devotions as well without these restraining acts as with them.

To me the fact is evident, that the putting forth of the arm of the civil power for the special protection of the first day of the week, is a weak attempt to steady the ark of the Lord, which is in no danger without it. I think it is an encroachment on the political rights of the *many*, for the benefit of the *few*. I would on no consideration condemn



the *keeping* of the day for religious services, but the compulsive manner in which people are coerced into idleness, who are restrained by law from occupying it as they do other days, I disapprove. For myself, I can truly say, it has often been my delight, and the source of many enjoyments, and far from me be the idea of compelling men to labour on that day, if their choice is to rest. But, as to the day, I consider one no better than another. All days are the Lord's days, and one equally as blessed as another, and this is the way in which the apostles of our Lord viewed the subject.

The vigorous exertions which are made simultaneously throughout the Union for the special protection of this day, I consider as daring and dangerous. It is in my estimation, a direct appeal to the prejudices and the cupidity of the populace, which offers a premium for taking sides. It is a desperate attempt to regain an influence in danger of being lost, and partakes strongly of the principles of a gambler, who risks all on the throw of a die. With all the boast exhibited of the success of former plans, the proposition contained in this scheme for the erection of a *Christian party in politics* is the boldest and most imposing; if the friends to our liberal principles of government are not on the alert, it will ultimately succeed.— *It is the strongest ground which they can take, without the power of a despotic government.* This plan arrays all the superstition in our country on its side, and wields the most powerful weapon known to the Union. On this point, all the force of all the illiberal sects can be brought to a focus, without compromising their peculiar dogmas. Against this accumulated and concentrated strength, we have nothing to oppose, save the scattered knowledge, the firmness, and the good common sense of the community.

The case appears to be a plain one. On one side is a ponderous, a dead weight, ready to crush our liberties,

and reduce us to a state of ecclesiastical vassalage, from which nothing short of a revolution can deliver us. On the other side, are talent, and vigour, and intelligence, which, if used with discretion, may avert the danger, and save the republic. The odds are fearful indeed, but "wisdom is profitable to direct." MENTOR.

#### SABBATH LAWS.

To undertake to give a detail of all that the clergy and their partizans are now doing to enforce a more rigorous observance of the Sabbath, and to obtain legal enactments, by Congress, to aid them in their work, would occupy our pages for more than twelve months to come. Suffice it to say, that they are making a desperate and almost universal effort, by means of petitions and other measures, to induce Congress to pass a law prohibiting the transportation of the mails and opening of post-offices on the Sabbath throughout the United States. A committee in New York has forwarded a printed letter to the post masters to the south and west, and another committee at Boston, has forwarded its letter to nearly every post master in New England.\* The letter from New York requests the post master to whom it is sent to prepare a memorial to Congress, praying that the transportation and opening of mails, &c. on the Sabbath, may no longer be required, and desires him to take immediate measures to procure the signatures of those in his neighbourhood who are friendly to the object, and to forward it to a member of Congress immediately. "We hope, also," adds the committee, "that

\* Says the *Boston Recorder*: "A Memorial prepared here has been sent to nearly every post master in New England, with a Circular from a dozen leading gentlemen, inviting the general and immediate co-operation of all the friends of the Sabbath in procuring signatures." The editors add: "We hope and pray that the voice of New England may be heard at Washington, and that it will be without one discordant note."

the most influential men in your vicinity will write to those members of the government and of Congress they are acquainted with, urging upon them the importance of the measure proposed." If the post master cannot attend to the subject of the letter, he is requested "to hand it over immediately to some influential friend favorable to the object, with a request that he will attend to it without delay."

The letter from the committee at Boston was accompanied by a memorial to Congress, and the post master is requested to use his influence to obtain signers, &c. "We respectfully request," says the committee, "that you will take immediate and effectual measures to accomplish the following objects. 1st. To obtain signatures to a suitable memorial to Congress on the subject. 2d. To cause this letter to be laid before the friends of the Sabbath in your town. 3d. To call such meetings, and have such committees appointed as shall bring the subjects before the people of your town. 4th. To transmit memorials to some member of Congress, as soon as the signatures can be obtained. 5th. It is also desirable that the members of Congress should be written to by persons in their respective districts, who will be most likely to have influence with them, and their efficient support of the measure solicited." The letter thus concludes: "*This circular is not designed for the newspapers; but you are at liberty to make any other public use of it.*"

Petitions for stopping the mails on the Sabbath, are pouring in to Congress from all parts of the Union. A Washington paper of Jan. 12th, says, "they were so numerous, that we are compelled to-day to omit our usual notice of them."

In opposition to these schemes and plans of the clergy to get Congress to acquiesce in their measures, numerous meetings have been held in the state of New York and elsewhere, and in some places counter memorials and

petitions, to be sent to Congress, have been got up and circulated. But from a conviction that Congress will never give their support or sanction to such a measure, many deem it unnecessary to address a word to them on the subject.\* A few of the sentiments expressed at some of those meetings, is all we can find room for at present.

At a meeting held at LE ROY, N.Y. Dec. 13th, the following, among other resolutions, were submitted and unanimously adopted.

"Whereas, a petition is in circulation to be presented to the present Congress of the United States, praying the passage of a law prohibiting the transportation of the Mails, on the first day of the week, commonly called Sunday, Therefore:

"*Resolved*, That we deem it our duty to *remonstrate* against the granting of the prayer of said petition; believing the same to have been put in circulation by a few interested individuals; that such a law is not called for, or desired even by the religious part of the community; that it would be extremely injurious to business men and the country, and in our opinion prejudicial to the cause of religion, virtue, and morality.

"*Resolved*, That religious freedom is the most prominent and ennobling feature of our government, that entire liberty of *conscience* upon subjects of a spiritual nature, and of *practice* in any form of religious worship, is sacred to the people of this republic by the genius of its institutions and the express letter of its constitution, that the observance, or non-observance of

\* The "Connecticut Observer," a Presbyterian paper, printed at Hartford, Conn. in speaking of the petitions to Congress for prohibiting the transportation of the mails on the Sabbath, says: "If the petitioners do not effect their object by this appeal to Congress, they will probably put forth more effort in another; or else, despairing of help from this source, will look with more earnestness for *some other means* of effecting their purpose." What these *other means* are, we are unable to divine.



the first day of the week, as a season of public repose and worship, is a matter of private conscience purely with every individual, for the exercise of which, he cannot be made responsible to any human tribunal, and on which, therefore, his fellow has no right to judge him; much less to pursue him with temporal punishment; that in claiming the privilege of receiving Letters and Papers from the Post Office on Sunday, we are not aware that we are insisting upon any right incompatible with the liberty of conscience of any of our fellow-citizens who may not choose to frequent the Post-Office on that day; and therefore, a denial of the enjoyment of such privileges to us, can only be ascribed to a spirit of bigoted intolerance, altogether incompatible with the principles of our republican institutions.

*Resolved*, That the disposition in a part of mankind to enforce an acknowledgement of their principles or tenets, either civil or ecclesiastical, upon the other, whether by force, fraud, or interest, or in any other manner, than upon a conviction of the understanding, or the conscience, after full and free investigation, amounts in every instance, either to civil oppression or religious intolerance, and is the legitimate offspring of ignorance, arrogance, or corruption—that therefore, we shall ever view with distrust, the combined operations (under any pretence whatever) of any sect or denomination of Christians, which have for their object, dominion over the minds and actions of men, through the aid of human laws, *compelling* a rule of action which they may deem consistent with their particular creed or articles of faith.

*Resolved*, That we recommend to our fellow-citizens generally, to oppose with open and manly decision, that spirit of intolerance and denunciation which has entailed so much misery on mankind, and which still tarnishes so deeply the character of the present age; that we will caution them to be-

ware how they lend the best feelings and intentions of their nature to a few specious individuals or sects, to establish certain modes of thinking, which are unsanctioned by the genius and spirit of our institutions; or how they lend their aid to the furtherance of a particular project, however plausible in itself, when by so doing, they may recognise a principle which aims at the subversion of liberty."

At a meeting held at Victor, N. Y. Dec. 17th, the following resolutions were presented and unanimously adopted:

*Resolved*, That we believe the attempt to control the transportation of the mail, is another link in the chain of measures which are in progress to subvert our high chartered privileges, as handed down to us in our constitution and laws.

*Resolved*, That as there are many who believe that the observance of the first day of the week is enjoined upon men only by human authority, we view it of fatal tendency to commence a proscription of such, on account of that belief, and as nearly allied to those measures which have been but too successfully employed to degrade and enslave mankind.

*Resolved*, That we view with disapprobation and alarm, the efforts that are now making in different parts of our land, to enforce sectarian principles of religion by compulsory means.

*Resolved*, That the christian religion is sufficient from its intrinsic excellencies, to secure the approbation of mankind, and that all attempts to enforce it by extraneous means, are a violation of its most beautiful and important features."

A very numerous and respectable meeting of the citizens of Salem, Mass. "*opposed to legislative interference in respect to the religious observance of Sunday*," was lately held at the Town Hall in that place. Among various other resolutions proposed and unani-

mously adopted at the meeting, were the following:

"*Resolved*, That under no circumstances has religion excited such general interest, as when, not rendered odious by legal restrictions, it has addressed its claims for support to the understandings and consciences of men.

"*Resolved*, That a '*system of regulations*' for the purpose of enforcing religious observances, is opposed to the principles of religious liberty, and to our form of civil government; and it is to be feared that any attempts to introduce such regulations will re-act in consequences detrimental to the interests which it may have been intended to promote.

"*Resolved*, That any change in the present arrangement of the mails, which shall have the effect to subject to increased delay and hazard the communication between distant parts of the country, is impolitic; and if authorized by Congress for the sole purpose of enforcing religious observances, will be an exercise of power for the accomplishment of an object not recognized by the Constitution, and contrary to its spirit and the intentions of its framers."

*Extract of a letter from a Post Master in Virginia.*

"I lately received a letter from a committee in New York, who wish me to assist them to prepare memorials to Congress, praying that Congress may pass a law that the transportation and opening of mails, and the delivery of letters, &c. on the Sabbath, may no longer be required. I should be very willing, on my own account, as I am a post master, to have such a law passed, but as I fear it is a long shoot of the orthodox, I think it would be well if the people could ascertain why these so called pious men trouble themselves so much for the Lord's day or Sabbath to be under the protection of the law. I fear there is some hook concealed in the bait."

[From a Boston Paper.]

SUNDAY MAILS.

Great efforts are making in different parts of the Union to procure the passage of a national law, prohibiting the transportation of the mails on the Christian Sabbath; a memorial to this effect has recently been circulated with great industry throughout this city.—We cannot suppose, for a moment, that Congress will pay much heed to this project—for, in the first place, the whole business of the country would be thrown into confusion—and in the next place, the proposed measure savours too strongly of that union of church and state, which is utterly incompatible with the doctrines of republicanism.

[From the Trenton Federalist.]

THE OBSERVANCE OF SUNDAY.

The following observations were committed to paper some months ago, when the project to which they refer was fresh in the public mind; but believing that amid the din of politics which then resounded through the country, remonstrance upon this, or any other topic, would pass by unheeded, I was induced to lay them aside. They are now offered for publication, because the obnoxious design does not appear to be abandoned; and from a belief that the whole subject is one, towards which a wakeful scrutiny may be at all times profitably directed.

I am induced to trouble you with this communication, not so much with the expectation of advancing any thing new, as from a desire of being in some sort instrumental, in exciting public vigilance towards the operations of a spirit, which if not checked decisively and speedily, will in its natural course, lead to results most disastrous, to what has been hitherto the boast of our country—the religious freedom of its institutions.

The spirit to which I allude, and which though constantly changing its



aspect, yet never relinquishes its purpose, is now manifesting itself in the organization throughout the country, of societies having for their object the more effectual sanctification of the Sunday. The zeal with which this project was started, and the energy with which it has been pursued, are calculated to draw strongly towards it the public attention; and before the passions are engaged, or the judgment fixed upon either side, it is highly important to examine it coolly in all its bearings. The result of such an investigation, has been on my mind an entire conviction of the impropriety of the plan itself, and of its inefficacy as to the production of its ostensible object; the moral improvement of the community. It embraces in its very nature, however it may be disguised by the ingenuity of its advocates, an attempt to *force the consciences* and faith of the citizens of this republic. The peculiar bearing of the system upon different classes of the community will be obvious, when we reflect, that there are in this country, enjoying the benign influence of its institutions, and sharing equally with any other citizens the protection of our laws, a part of a people who in the preservation of a system derived from the Deity himself, keep holy to his service the seventh day of the week. There is among us a sect of christians, who, from a belief that scriptural authority does not enjoin any alteration, still preserve and sanctify the same day. And there are lastly very many among all denominations who believe, and who can find nothing in the book of revelation opposed to the belief, that the christian Sunday does not require the same rigorous observance as was demanded for the Sabbath of the old dispensation.

Upon each of the individuals maintaining either of these doctrines, the measures in question are a grievance; in as much as they tend to fix a standard of faith different from what their religion or their reason dictates.

Here, however, we shall perhaps be met with the observation, that as the friends of these schemes have very generally disavowed all intention of resorting to force, and have referred themselves entirely to the use of the *moral sense* of the community, any alarm upon the subject must be gratuitous and unfounded. Now in reply to this observation we maintain, that as the end in view is in our opinion altogether unjustifiable, the propriety of the means by which it is to be brought about, has but little bearing on the controversy. It will afford but little consolation to those who shall be deprived of the use of their property, or who shall be cut off from the pursuit of their occupations, to be told that though they feel the pressure, yet no force has been applied; that though their constitutional rights have been interfered with, yet the *moral sense* of the community has sanctioned the aggression. But leaving for the present this branch of the argument, let us see how far this abjuration of the forcible alternative is borne out by facts. Let us examine for one moment these moral weapons, with which the holy warfare is to be waged, in order that from a knowledge of them, we may know what to expect should a resort to force ever be deemed necessary.

It will be found that a leading feature in most of these combinations, is the signing of a pledge, or the entering into an agreement to give as far as practicable, a preference to those who in the line of their business, signify their adhesion to the principles of these reformers. It matters not that these attacks are as yet ostensibly confined to the proprietors of the lines of public conveyance. An attack upon the rights of one part of the community, should be felt as an insult to the whole. Success in one encroachment ever has led and ever will lead to the attempting of another. And what can hold out greater prospects of success? And what at the same time can look more unlike a resort to the *moral*

sense, than a direct reference to the most sordid of the passions? The offering publicly of a premium for hypocrisy.

In short, measures of this sort exhibiting in the very outset loss of custom, and consequent embarrassment as *persuatives* to uniformity of faith and practice, strike me as being in their nature decisively coercive; and in the event of their failure let me ask, what are the forcible measures that remain to be adopted. If nothing short of the infliction of corporal penalties answers in the eyes of these gentlemen to the forcible interference of the law, the public have a right to be aware of it.

This scheme, if it were the result of an independent or an isolated effort, could occasion but little anxiety; it would be regarded as a transitory effusion of zeal, which should be allowed to exhaust itself, and sink undisturbed into oblivion. But viewed as one of the pioneers of an ecclesiastical system, which has been already matured, it assumes a more important aspect and should meet with a prompt and energetic resistance. A well guided spirit of christianity never yet gave rise to an impertinent interference with the opinions of others; but the origin of this, as well as of all similar attempts, is to be found in that Pharisaical spirit of self sufficiency, which generates a fanaticism without piety, and a bigotry without religion; which leads men to believe that as their righteousness is unblemished, they have leisure to attend to the wanderings of their neighbours: and totally regardless of the conscientious faith of others, makes them exclaim, we only have embraced the true doctrines of the gospel, and every departure from our standard is dangerous and heretical.

*A Lover of Toleration.*

*For the Reformer.*

[Communicated from Connecticut.]

*Mr. Editor*—Why are enlightened men whose researches have fathomed the depth of science, and whose talents

and learning shine so conspicuous at the present day, men who are capable of treating any subject with a masterly hand, capable of painting its deformities in their most odious colours, and placing its good features in their most pleasing form—I repeat, why should such men be backward about expressing an opinion on the subject of religion, unless that opinion happens to accord with the present received notions of the day? That there are such men in this land of liberty and religious freedom, cannot be denied; men too, who shine conspicuous in the management of our political affairs, and who are, it is charitably believed, possessed of discrimination enough to distinguish between the true system of christianity which our modern Pharisees profess, and the proselyting money-making schemes which they pursue. Then why do such men by their silence countenance these anti-christian schemes—why do they, when solicited, contribute to their own and country's ruin—and why do our grave legislators suffer their names to grace the reports of institutions whose object they soberly disapprove.

We have no laws as yet that condemn a man to the stake for merely expressing an opinion; and although the Pilgrims our fathers scourged and hung such as they called heretics, yet their enlightened sons have proclaimed that all are by nature equal, and of right ought to be free. Now this all will acknowledge to be sound doctrine, and that a man possesses the undeniable right of thinking, speaking, and acting in what manner he please, provided he injures not his neighbor in so doing. Then why, I ask, should a man fear to exercise those rights? I answer: No honest man does. It is only those who expect pecuniary benefits or favor to arise from their silence—men who are seeking for worldly honours or wealth.

Such men, from the petty squire and constable, to the highest officer of the nation, are silent as the grave;



one subscribes liberally for the support of some sectarian scheme, another bows obsequiously to priest and heretic, and all listen attentively to sycophant suppliants.

What good man does not deprecate such a state of corrupted society as now exists in this country—a country which declares itself free, yet has not spirit enough to assert its freedom—a country which boasts of its civil and religious rights, yet silently submits to see them trampled upon and in danger of being usurped by a combination of priestcraft, the well known foe of freedom and religious liberty, the scourge and devouring element of a free people. Honest Americans, arise! shake off the specious thralldom with which you all are bound; break the fetters which hamper your press, and make it worthy of a free country. Restore to yourselves those rights which an overbearing priesthood have adroitly managed to take from you, and proclaim to the world that you are worthy the name of freemen, and entitled to the rights which the blood of your ancestors bought and left you for an inheritance.

AMICUS.

*For the Reformer.*

#### FIRST PRINCIPLES.

A frequent recurrence to first principles, is essentially necessary to preserve in purity any established system among men. But when repeated inroads and infringements have been made upon a system, and threaten its entire overthrow, that necessity becomes more imperative, in order more effectually to guard against future innovations.

To enumerate the dreadful evils which, from time to time, have been practiced upon mankind, under pretence of promoting the interests of the christian religion, must be painful to every mind possessed of christian feeling. On the present occasion it would be unnecessary, as by a reference to church history those who are not already acquainted with the facts may

there find them recorded as it were in letters of blood. Men whose temporal interests were closely connected with the church have ever been assiduous in inventing and promoting schemes, and prevailing on those who were ignorant of the real tendency of such schemes, to aid them in order to secure to themselves that power and dignity to which they aspired, and which, when obtained, they have never voluntarily relinquished.

Men like these are they (to use scripture language) "By reason of whom the way of truth is evil spoken of." Their usurpations in the church, and their insatiable thirst for wealth, have laid the foundation stone of practical infidelity, and until consistency appears among those who profess to be the disciples of Christ, all their specious zeal for religion will only aid in defeating the cause which they pretend to espouse; for who that is not either blinded by bigotry or willingly ignorant, cannot perceive that the temporal dignity and interests of the clergy, are essentially connected with the popular religious schemes of the present day?

When we advert to the principles of the pure gospel of Christ, we are struck with astonishment at that apathy and ignorance which have pervaded the church throughout every period of her history down to the present time. Had Christians been only as jealous of their religious rights as ministers of the gospel (so called) are of their power, they would never have jeopardized both their civil and religious liberties in the hands of the latter, nor would they have left the history of the church sullied by the bloody details of clerical tyranny and oppression. But that indifference which is manifested by mankind to their best interests, and that never tiring disposition of the clergy to aspire after wealth and power, are not among the least evidences of the depravity of the human heart.

The circumstances under which corruption and degeneracy enter and pre-

vail in the church, may be very properly compared to sleep; and here Christ himself has furnished us with a parable—"But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat." Thus men rest in seeming security, unsuspecting of approaching danger, vainly supposing that true religion keeps pace with the numerous schemes and gaining influence of the clergy, and without ever comparing their proceedings and pretensions with the principles of the gospel of Christ, they sleep on until some sudden shock of exerted clerical power arouses them from their lethargy, and when awake they find out to their sorrow they have slept too long; they awake only to bitter reflection without a hope of bettering their condition.

Too many christians, in the present day, content themselves with looking back to the evils of the church in ages past, and are astonished at the inconsistency of the clergy in imposing such absurdities on the world, while they conceive themselves perfectly safe under circumstances (when we take into account the great diffusion of light which since then has prevailed in the world) not less inconsistent. W.

"I so run, not as uncertainly."—PAUL.

These words are worthy the serious consideration of every one engaged in the christian course; for they plainly imply there is such a thing as *running uncertainly*. How many, indeed, exercise and busy themselves in the things of religion to no purpose—about this point of doctrine, or that little matter of order or ceremony—about this sectarian sentiment, or that particular rite or outward observance—while the true renovation and cultivation of their own hearts are disregarded and unheeded. They are running, to be sure, and with zeal and earnestness, but they are *running uncertainly*.

But does that person run uncertainly whose main and principal aim is to become right, and do right? who seeks

to have every wrong feeling and disposition done away out of his heart? who endeavours to avoid every wrong act, and to do in every case as he would another should do unto him? Certainly not. He runs not *as uncertainly*, and as surely as he thus runs, he will obtain the prize of divine favor and approbation, while the other will as surely fail of acceptance before God, notwithstanding all his zeal and activity in the things of religion. All he does will avail him no more than the works and doings of those who shall say, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" To whom Christ will say, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

[From the London Globe.]

BOW STREET.—A fellow named Wm. Gent, was brought up on a warrant, charged with cruelly ill-treating his wife.

The complainant, a very decent looking woman, who was scarcely able to stand, in consequence of the injuries she had sustained from the defendant's violent conduct towards her, stated that she had been married to him about ten years, and that latterly his conduct had been violent in the extreme. Last Wednesday evening, on his returning home *from chapel*, he beat her first with his fist, and afterwards knocked her down with a chair, with which he continued striking her until she was covered with bruises from head to foot. She also sustained a very serious internal injury, from the effects of which she is not likely to recover for a considerable time.

The defendant, in answer to the charge, commenced by stating, "I had been to a meeting of an *Hoxiliary* Missionary Society, your worship."

Mr. Halls—Don't talk to me, fellow, about Missionary Societies. A



wretch who could treat his wife in the brutal manner you have done is a disgrace to any society.

The defendant continued: and when I left chapel one of the members and myself had a few glasses of gin together, and then I went home, and laid down on the bed, as I was very sleepy, but my wife would not let me lie, and so I admit I was provoked to thrash her.

Mr. Halls—And so, after attending these Missionary meetings, you and the members go to public-houses and get drunk, and then beat your wives. You must find bail, and I hope your wife will exhibit articles of the peace against you.

The defendant was then locked up, and the unfortunate complainant was led out of the office apparently almost in a dying state.

*For the Reformer.*

**TRUTH DEFENDED.**

Truth is the same in verse or prose,  
Though times may change, no change it knows;

Tho' climates, men, tastes, all be various,  
The truth is never found precarious.  
Truth may in various forms address'd,  
Find readier access to each breast;  
As glasses suited to the eyes,  
Accommodates each one who spies.  
Mine be the task, this present time,  
The truth to paint in simple rhyme:  
For high pretensions I've ne'er made,  
Nor feign'd the Poet for a trade;  
Content so I may but contribute,  
To Truth's blest cause some humble tri-  
bute;

Aid to unmask the face of error,  
And hold to public view its terror.  
Errors (the vilest and the worst)  
Will oft times flatter at the first,  
And e'en the darkest Son of Night,  
Assume the angel form of light:  
Thus counterfeits avoid detection,  
As unperceiv'd their imperfection;  
And danger most is found to rest,  
With those who imitate the best.  
Religion! offspring of the skies,  
The source of every bliss I prize;  
The light to erring mortals giv'n,  
Which leads from earth, and guides to  
heav'n.

Oft has thy sacred name been press'd  
To sanction many a deed unblest,

To feed the rich, to rob the poor,  
And dark intriguers to secure:  
Deep are the schemes which men have  
laid,

From vain pretence thy cause to aid,  
As though a plant of heavenly birth,  
Were nurtured with the dross of earth,  
Or that thy cause would better grow  
'Mid worldly splendor, wealth and show.  
Seek not the things of earth, they cry;  
But lay up treasures in the sky;  
Yet they themselves by actions show,  
On wealth they build their hopes below.  
Yet this perhaps will be denied,  
Then let us have it fairly tried.

Effect, by philosophic laws,  
Cannot exist without a cause;  
And hence from day to day we're told,  
The vast importance of our gold;  
That millions die, who else might live;  
If we our cash would freely give.

A dollar given may save a soul  
From death while endless ages roll;  
Giv'n do they say? nay 'tis but lent,  
And children may cast in a cent;  
And hence they make all good depend,  
On those who thus their cash will lend.

But here again I meet objection,  
And that from men of some reflection:  
Say they, a task you've undertaken,  
But in your views you're quite mistaken;  
We would not have it understood,  
Money the cause of all the good.

'Tis not the cause, but means alone,  
Through which, we say, the good is done;  
And common sense proclaims it right,  
That ends with means we should unite:  
Here is the point where thousands err,  
But let me show the point more clear.

\* Right ends alone, proclaim half wit,  
The means must also rightly fit;  
That means are us'd 'tis not denied,  
But human means are classified,

† And God the weakest things hath chose,  
Proud human wisdom to oppose;  
He ne'er has made his cause depend  
On those who beg, or those who lend;  
Cash may enrich the parson's purse,  
But wealthy parsons are a curse;  
Of this there cannot be a doubt,  
The church's history bears me out.

Hence Christ ordain'd no wealthy source,  
To which his preachers had recourse;  
‡ Birds without barns (said he) are fed,  
And you like them must trust for bread;  
If sparrows are with food supplied,  
Will you expect to be denied?

\* Right ends and means make wisdom;  
worldly wise is but half witted at its high-  
est praise.—*Young's Night Thoughts.*

† 1 Cor. i. 27.

‡ Mat. vi. 26.

" If lilies stand in robes unwrought,  
 Can you for raiment take a thought?  
 The cattle on a thousand hills,  
 The water in a thousand rills,  
 The crops which load a thousand fields,  
 The plenty which creation yields;  
 Are but as one vast table spread,  
 Your heavenly Father at the head;  
 He will impart what you most need,  
 That you must trust him is decreed.  
 But artful men who preach and pray,  
 Like hireling servants for their pay,  
 Will tell us we must bear the curse,  
 If we withhold from them our purse:  
 They cannot preach without a store,  
 Like sparrows pick, then trust for more:  
 But if a wealthy fund we'll raise,  
 Then they'll extend the gospel blaze;  
 Long as their well fill'd purses shine,  
 They'll prove the christian faith divine;  
 But if on God they must depend,  
 Their preaching soon will have an end.  
 Thus Pharisees of old we know,  
 Dealt largely in parade and show;  
 Zealous the scriptures to applaud,  
 They made their long phylacteries broad:  
 Their synagogues they oft did crowd,  
 Their prayers too, were long and loud—  
 Yet all was false. Thus by sly stealth,  
 They sought the nation's power and  
 wealth. J. W.

[From a London Paper.]

The present Ministry of France have done an infinite service to their country by suppressing the growth of Jesuitism, and driving from the Tuilleries those agents of this most debased priesthood, who had insinuated themselves into the councils of the King, and almost controlled them. The liberty of the human soul is of more importance to mankind than any civil right whatever; and it is vain that freedom, under the charter, is proposed to the subject, whilst his mind is held in bondage to a gross superstition.

We have to thank many of our subscribers who have already let us know by their remittances, that they are not unmindful of us. We hope that others, by following their example, will make it manifest that they are aware of the expenses incurred by the publication of a periodical work. Many with more subscribers than are on our list, have been compelled to give up their publications for want of punctuality in payments, after losing several hundred dollars. We should be sorry to have this our fate, as it would afford too great a tri-

\* Mat. vi. 28, 29.

umph to the advocates of priesthood, and be calculated to deter others from engaging in a work opposed to the popular but corrupt and anti-christian schemes of the day. We would inform our subscribers that one dollar or other small notes will still be received in payment, for although the law prohibiting the circulation of notes less than five dollars has gone into effect in this state, we can dispose of smaller notes at the brokers.

We would take occasion here to state that the *Telescope*, a weekly paper printed at New York at two dollars a year, *Priestcraft Exposed* at Lockport, N. Y. *Plain Truth* at Rochester, N. Y. and the *Free Meetings Advocate* at Auburn, N. Y. each one dollar a year and issued monthly and half-monthly, are all engaged in much the same cause as the Reformer, and we would wish the public to extend to them all the patronage in their power. They are greatly needed at this time and ought to be sustained. William Andrews particularly, the editor of the *Free Meetings Advocate* at Auburn, has already made great sacrifices in continuing his work, and was at one period under a necessity to suspend its publication for some time, till, by the labour of his own hands, he earned enough to proceed again. While we desire all who have come out against the mighty and the strong of this world may be sustained, we hope others will feel themselves called to become active labourers in the same field, and by their instrumentality, save this country and the cause of pure and undefiled religion from that destruction by which at present it is threatened.

A new work of Lorenzo Dow is about to be published, entitled "*Omnifarious Laws;—exemplified:—how to curse and swear—lie—cheat and kill,—according to law!*" Price twenty-five cents." The title of the work is a singular one, but it is designed we presume as a severe castigation of the practices and usages in civil society.

\* \* A number of articles intended for this number, are necessarily delayed till our next, in consequence of the quantity of matter inserted with respect to stopping the transportation of the mails on Sunday.

The Reformer is printed on the first of each month, at one dollar a year. Letters to be addressed and payment made, to T. R. GATES, Proprietor and principal Editor, No. 290, North Third Street, Philadelphia. Numbers can be supplied from the commencement of the work.